

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) released the following statement in reaction to the morning meeting at the Pentagon, joining with Virginia Governor McDonnell and other members of the Congressional delegation in demanding answers on the abrupt August 9, 2010, announcement proposing the closure of Joint Forces Command. Virginia officials met with Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn, III, and General James E. Cartwright, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“The meeting today at the Pentagon can simply be described as a bitter disappointment,” Wittman said. “Instead of meeting our expectations to gain a clearer understanding of the announcement to close Joint Forces Command and to cut the contractor workforce, the Defense Department failed to provide any substantive evidence that a thoughtful analysis of this decision took place. Instead, we were left with a disturbing impression that no objective, written analysis of its strategic impact exists, and that the “efficiency” a closure would provide in the defense budget is “yet to be determined.” Unchecked, negligent, and hasty decision-making within the Defense Department of this country is simply unacceptable, and undermines the confidence in the decisions made by the leaders of this country on behalf of our military and our citizens. I support the goal of making our federal agencies more efficient, but we must do so in thoughtful way and in the best interests of this nation. We will continue to hold DoD accountable on this decision as we receive their testimony in hearings this week.”

On Wednesday, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) will meet to receive testimony from Department of Defense officials on their Efficiency Initiatives. The hearing is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. Wittman, a member of HASC, will join the meeting to inquire further on the proposed closure of Joint Forces Command.

BACKGROUND

Members of the Virginia delegation have made repeated written requests to Secretary Robert Gates and the Administration, calling on them to illustrate the research, analysis, and documentation that justifies this decision to ensure that it is consistent with national defense needs.

On Monday evening, Wittman joined Virginia members in a letter to Secretary Gates once again calling on DoD, stating, “*In the nearly two months since your announcement, we have sent*

multiple requests for substantiating information... If the Department does not provide the requested information and documents prior to or at the scheduled hearings on this matter on 28-29 September, we will request that the Chairs of the committees of jurisdiction use every means available to compel the Department of Defense to provide the documents and information to Congress.”

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee